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PATENT

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For: **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING SUBSYSTEM PROCESSES IN A DMD SYSTEM**

Enclosed with the Patent Application are:

- ☒ Two (2) sheets of Drawings
☒ Declaration and Power of Attorney
☒ Assignment and Recordation Form
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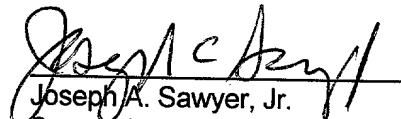
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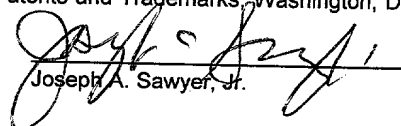
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Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr.

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING SUBSYSTEM
PROCESSES IN A DMD SYSTEM**

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING SUBSYSTEM PROCESSES IN A DMD SYSTEM

RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present invention is related to co-pending U.S. Application, entitled
MULTIMEDIA INFORMATION COMPUTER SYSTEM AND METHOD OF
OPERATION OF A PLAYLIST SCHEDULER, serial no. 09/420,802, filed on October 19,
1999, and assigned to the assignee of the present invention.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to digital media distribution, and more particularly to
managing subsystem processes from a central site in a digital media distributor (DMD) system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Although broadcasters have sophisticated systems for inserting national commercials
into a program stream, including integrated traffic and billing systems, there are numerous
obstacles to implementing a system to insert local commercials at small markets into a
national program feed distributed by satellite. Until now, such local spot insertion
advertising was the responsibility of the local broadcaster or cable operator.

Inserting local advertising poses several nontrivial technical, logistical and business
challenges. First, literally hundreds of widely distributed local operators (or affiliates) would
need to receive the commercials; ad agencies would have to ship analog tapes to hundreds of
organizations, with different traffic and billing systems. These tapes would need to be tested
for quality assurance, tracked, and stored until needed. They would then have to be

distributed to video tape recorders and readied for computer controlled playout (analog) at the proper time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Such infrastructure generally exists at well-funded affiliates in major markets but is nonexistent and prohibitively expensive for smaller operators or affiliates in small markets.

5 Managing such tapes with ads for local commercials and inserting them properly into the program feed is a complex undertaking not well-suited for the smaller operators, especially for channels with smaller audiences in smaller markets. A quality broadcast involves more than excellent program material; it must provide seamless insertion of national and local advertisements, promotions, and station identifications.

10 Equally important is the ability to maintain the integrity of the national television programming. Centralized control of the channel's programming (playout) is required to prevent local affiliates from tampering with the programming.

15 A need exists for a digital media distributor system with centralized and autonomous management of subsystem processes associated with data object transmissions. The present invention addresses such a need.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 Aspects for managing subsystem processes from a central site in a digital media distributor system are presented. The aspects include utilizing a plurality of threads as a task manager in a central site server of the digital media distributor, and autonomously controlling initiation and termination of one or more subsystem processes with the task manager. The aspects further include providing the task manager as a main program thread of an operating system of a central site server of the DMD system, and managing subsystem processes from start-

up to shut down, including states of online, offline, process inoperable, deadlock inoperable, and spawn inoperable, with the task manager to dynamically manage the DMD system.

Through the present invention, a task manager provides an ability to manage subsystem processes associated with data object transmissions of the DMD in a straightforward and effective manner. A thread architecture of the task manager achieves efficiency through worker thread command objects for each subsystem process that allows autonomous control of the subsystem process(es) that are operating. Thus, the task manager successfully monitors global system performance needs. These and other advantages of the present invention will be more fully understood in conjunction with the following detailed description and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a block diagram of a digital media distribution system in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 2 illustrates an example of a suitable layered architecture for the central site server.

Figure 3 illustrates a thread architecture for a task manager of the central site server in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 4 illustrates a task manager state diagram in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to managing subsystem processes in a digital media distributor system. The following description is presented to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention and is provided in the context of a patent application and its requirements. Various modifications to the preferred embodiment and the generic principles and features described herein will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiment shown but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and features described herein.

In accordance with the present invention, a digital media distributor (DMD) provides a complete end-to-end system that gives local cable or network affiliates the ability to provide local ads and announcement insertion together with the delivery of cable or network feed(s). In general, the DMD integrates the entire process of sales, traffic, digital encoding and storage of spots, transmission of data, local insertion of digital ads and announcements, account reconciliation, and billing. Spots (i.e., media such as commercials, station identification, public service announcements, etc.) are digitized by the cable or network operator, and then digitally transmitted to the local cable head-ends or network affiliates from a central site. These digital spots are then stored on the remote site servers located at each head-end or affiliate.

A block diagram of a DMD in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in Figure 1. As shown, the DMD includes three major components: a central site 10, a distribution network 12, and a remote site 14. The central site 10 is the location for the digital encoding of MPEG-2 files from source video tapes, storage and management of digital files, management of remote site(s) 14, and distribution of schedules and MPEG-2

files. Thus, the processing, analysis, distribution, and management of data occurs at the central site 10. The distribution network 12 is the mechanism by which the remote site(s) 14 receive program streams and digital spots. The data distribution is accomplished via various methods, such as a satellite and/or land-based distribution. The broadcaster may choose to have the program stream sent via terrestrial links (e.g., token ring, ethernet, etc.), while the spot insertion is sent via satellites or vice versa.

The remote site(s) 14 house the remote site server(s) 16. By way of example, a suitable remote site server 16 includes a Pentium processor-based device with a hard disk for local storage and a video switch card (to switch between program and commercial insertion) running software including Windows NT, DMD programming, Lotus Notes client, Program Loader, and Symantec pcANYWHERE. These unattended, computerized systems receive the local spot insertion and provide As-Run file generation. The remote site server 16 is a video server that receives and stores digitized spots utilized for local insertion at the cable head-end. The remote site server 16 receives digitally encoded ads via satellite or other distribution network. These spots are decoded to an analog signal and inserted into the cable or network operator feed at scheduled times, i.e., into scheduled local availability times. The remote site server 16 can be customized in various configurations based on the number of output channels required, the type of output format (e.g., NTSC, PAL), the amount of local storage required (i.e., the number of spots on disk), the type of network (satellite or terrestrial), the type of trigger for spot insertion (e.g., time of day, VITC, cue-tome, VBI trigger), the audio format and connections (stereo, mini-XLR or XLR), the redundancy requirements (RAID, mirrored disks), and the preview channel.

By way of example, the following provides a sample process that illustrates an example of one process which the DMD solution can support. A region, e.g., any grouping of one or many cable head-ends for cities, states, provinces, or countries, defined by cable or network operators in an area, sells a commercial in the local availability time. All remote site servers 16 within the same region play the same material at the same time, including all network programs, national spots, local commercials, announcements, etc. The videotaped segment for the commercial is digitally encoded. The digital material is scheduled for delivery to each remote site server 16 prior to broadcast. The playlist, digitized spots, and the broadcast program stream are sent, via satellite, to all of the remote site servers 16 within the region. All of the remote site servers 16 within the region air the local spots for that region at the scheduled time. As-Run logs are retrieved by the central site 10 from the remote site servers 16. As-Run logs are sent to the local markets, reviewed, reconciled, and customers are billed. Commercials and As-Run logs are archived.

A main component in the central site 10 is the central site server 18. By way of example, a suitable central site server 18 includes an IBM RS/6000 F50 dual CPU system, or a Pentium II compatible PC, running the IBM UNIX operating system, AIX, DB2 server software, Lotus Notes server software, ADSM, Windows NT (for PC-based central site server), and the DMD programming. Suitable components for the control workstations 19 include Pentium compatible PCs running Windows NT, Lotus Notes client, DB2 client, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and DMD programming.

The central site server 18 includes software on a suitable computer readable medium that is architected using a layered model, in which each layer isolates the upper layers from the details of the lower layers and individual components within a layer provide a unique set

of services, as is well appreciated by those skilled in the art. Figure 2 illustrates an example of a suitable layered architecture for the central site server 18. The top layer 20 addresses the external interfaces of the central site server 18, including a graphical user interface (GUI) component and the interfaces to the external systems. The GUI component, e.g., using Lotus Notes, provides administrators and operators with the ability to monitor and control the DMD. In accordance with the present invention, the interfaces to external systems include interfaces to traffic systems, interfaces to stations in a box (SIBs) which send Lotus Notes messages, and interfaces to encoder systems (22, Fig. 1), which store encoded spot files in a disk pool server for retrieval by the central site server 18.

Underneath the top layer is a layer 24 of specialized components including a stage manager component 26, an uplink server component 28, and a transmission scheduler component 30. This layer 24 may also include specialized components for creating commands and interpreting responses from SIBs, managing access to all the database queues and other data stores, and providing automated agents that run based on time or events to manage the external interfaces, e.g., processing files received from traffic systems. The stage manager 26 manages any tape related activity, the uplink server 28 manages transmissions through the uplink network (12, Fig. 1), and the transmission scheduler manages scheduling tasks. Also included as a next layer is a programming layer 32. The layer 32 includes the programming libraries and APIs (application programming interfaces) that are used to build the specialized components. The lower two layers include an operating system layer 34 and a hardware layer 36 for the fundamental operation of the central site server 18, as is well appreciated by those skilled in the art.

In accordance with the present invention, the operating system layer 34 of the central site server 18 includes a task manager 38 that dynamically starts and stops subprocesses for managing several of the processes of the central site server 18. These processes include the scheduler, the stage manager, an LIS (local insertion system) proxy, an error document check, a response document processor, a disk pool manager, a request generator, an all As-Run manager, an individual As-Run manager, an update network break time process, and a network local broadcast (NLSB) process. Using a standard thread model architecture, the task manager 38 includes a mainThread 40, one subsystem ControlThread 42, and worker threads, with a watchdog WorkerThread 44 and a spawn WorkerThread 46 per subsystem process 48, as shown in the diagram of Figure 3. The mainThread 40 is suitably provided as a traditional 'C' language (or other suitable language) main program thread with the operating system 34 as its parent. The subsystem ControlThread 42 has the mainThread 40 as its parent and determines which and if a subsystem process needs to be started. The watchdog WorkerThread 44 has the subsystem ControlThread 42 as its parent and performs mainly two functions: it starts subsystem process(es) through the spawn WorkerThread 46; and it monitors the performance of the subsystem process(es). The spawn WorkerThread 46 has the watchdog WorkerThread as its parent and performs the actual spawn of the subsystem and waits for its termination.

The subsystem ControlThread 42 preferably monitors global system performance needs by inspecting fields in a database provided for the subsystems according to a predefined polling interval (e.g., a poll interval of about 10 seconds) and logging its inspection time in a process logging table. If the subsystem ControlThread determines that

an instance of a subsystem needs to be started, and the subsystem is marked as operable, the subsystem ControlThread 42 starts a watchdog WorkerThread 44.

5 The watchdog WorkerThread 44 then starts a subsystem process through the spawn WorkerThread 46 and monitors the performance of the subsystem process. In starting the process through the spawn WorkerThread 46, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the spawning in a process logging table and process status table and waits for the termination of the spawn WorkerThread 46. The spawn WorkerThread 46 spawns the subsystem process and waits for termination. Termination occurs by the subsystem process itself and may be set to occur when a predetermined period of inactivity for the subsystem process is reached (e.g. about 3 seconds). Any termination causes the spawn WorkerThread 46 to save the return value for the termination, signal the watchdog WorkerThread 44 that it is terminating, and exit itself.

10 If the subsystem process terminates normally, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the normal termination in the process logging table and process status table, and exits itself. However, if the subsystem process terminates abnormally, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the abnormal termination in the process logging table and process status table and inspects previous entries in the process logging table to determine if the subsystem process has terminated abnormally a given number of times (e.g., 2) within a given number of poll intervals. If so, an e-mail is sent by the watchdog WorkerThread 44 to a system administrator. If not, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 attempts to remove the queue entry that the subsystem was processing at the time the subsystem process terminated. If the entry cannot be removed, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the inability to complete the remove operation in the process logging table, sends an e-mail to the system administrator,

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and sets a state variable in the appropriate database to indicate that the subsystem process is inoperable. If the entry can be removed, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the operation in the process logging table, and respawns the subsystem process, logging it in the process logging table and process status table.

5 In monitoring the performance of the subsystem process, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 does as its name implies, it acts as a watchdog for the subsystem process performance based on system throughput requirements. If the subsystem process does not appear to be meeting the throughput requirements, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 considers the subsystem process deadlocked. The watchdog WorkerThread 44 then sets a local program state variable for the spawn WorkerThread 46 that indicates that it will terminate the subsystem process. The watchdog WorkerThread 44 then issues a kill signal to the subsystem process. Upon receipt of the subsystem process termination, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 logs the subsystem process deadlock in the process logging and process status tables. Previous entries in the process logging table or local program variable are then inspected to determine if the subsystem process has deadlocked a given number of times within a given polling interval.

10
15
20 If the subsystem process has deadlocked the given number of times within the given polling interval, the watchdogWorkerThread clears the local program variable, sends an e-mail to the system administrator, and sets a state variable in the appropriate database indicating that the subsystem process is inoperable. If the subsystem process has not deadlocked the given number of times within the given interval, the watchdog WorkerThread 44 clears the local program variable and respawns the subsystem process, logging it in the process logging and process status tables.

Figure 4 illustrates a task manager state diagram for managed subsystems. The text shown in brackets ([]) in Figure 4 refers to internal processing performed by the task manager 38 that causes a state change, e.g., examining a request queue and determining something for the process to do or expiration of a predefined time period. Verbs that a command interface (e.g., a GUI) pushes onto the request queue appear in upper case text without the brackets. The text shown with the "xxx" extension refers to a subsystem process for correspondence with the associated verb in the uppercase text. The following tables more particularly describe the state transitions for both normal and abnormal transitions.

Normal Transitions:

State	Description
Offline 50	In normal conditions, the process is in the Offline state 50 until a STARTUP_xxx or STARTUP_SYS is received by the task manager 38
ReadyToRun 52	When the task manager 38 receives the STARTUP, it moves the process(es) to the ReadyToRun state 52; however the task manager 38 does not actually start running the process until the specified condition has been met, i.e., the presence of something on the request queue or expiration of a predefined time interval. If the task manager 38 receives a SHUTDOWN_xxx or SHUTDOWN_SYS for a process while in this state, the task manager 38 sets the process state to Offline 50.
Online (Running) 54	Once one of the above conditions has been met, the task manager 38 spawns the process and sets the state to Online (Running) 54
Offline Pending 56	If the task manager 38 receives a SHUTDOWN_xxx or SHUTDOWN_SYS signal, the task manager 38 pushes a request for the process to shutdown onto the request queue, then moves the process to Offline Pending state 56. If the process does not honor the request within a predefined interval, the task manager 38 moves the process to the Offline state 50 or terminates the process and then moves it to the Offline state 50.

Abnormal transitions:

A) Subsystem crashes while executing

State	Description
Online (Running) 54	If the process crashes more than a given number of times (e.g., 2) within a given time interval (e.g., 45 minutes), the task manager 38 stops trying to respawn the process and moves the process to an offline state, SpawnInopOffline 58.
SpawnInopOffline 58	Once in this state 58, operator intervention is needed to recover, and neither a STARTUP_XXX or STARTUP_SYS signal will move the process to the Online (Running) state 54. Once the operator fixes the problem, a RESTORE_XXX command is needed to place the process in the ReadyToRun state 52.
ReadyToRun 52	The task manager 38 does not start running the process until a specified condition has been met, i.e., the presence of something on the request queue or the expiration of some predefined time interval.

B) Subsystem deadlocks within some time period

State	Description
Online (Running) 54	If the process deadlocks more than a given number of times (e.g., 2) within a given interval (e.g., 45 minutes), the task manager 38 stops trying to respawn the process and moves the process to an offline state, DdlkInopOffline 60
DdlkInopPending 62	The task manager 38 places the process in this state 62 once the process has deadlocked and keeps the process there for a given amount of time, e.g., 2 hours, to see if the process will deadlock again. If the process does deadlock again, the task manager 38 moves the process to the DdlkInopOffline state 60. If the process does not deadlock again, the task manager 38 will move the process back to the Online (Running) state 54.
DdlkInopOffline 60	Once in this state 60, operator intervention is required to recover, and neither a STARTUP_XXX or STARTUP_SYS signal will move the process to the Online (Running) state 54. Once the operator fixes the problem, a RESTORE_XXX command is needed to place the process in the ReadyToRun state 52.
ReadyToRun 52	The task manager 38 does not start running the process until a specified condition has been met, i.e., the presence of something on the request queue or the expiration of some predefined time interval.

C) Subsystem unable to start due to external hardware or software

State	Description
Online (Running) 54	If the process can't start because some software or hardware is not running as reported to the task manager 38 by an exit status of the process(es), the task manager 38 stops trying to respawn the process and moves the process to an offline state, ProcInopOffline 64.
ProcInopOffline 64	Once in this state 64, operator intervention is needed to recover, and neither a STARTUP_xxx or STARTUP_SYS signal will move the process to the Online (Running) state 54. Once the operator fixes the problem, a RESTORE_xxx command is needed to place the process in the ReadyToRun state 52.
ReadyToRun 52	The task manager 38 does not start running the process until a specified condition has been met, i.e., the presence of something on the request queue or the expiration of some predefined time interval.

The task manager in accordance with the present invention provides an ability to manage subsystem processes associated with data object transmissions of the DMD in a straightforward and effective manner. The thread architecture of the task manager achieves efficiency through worker thread command objects for each subsystem process that allows autonomous control of the subsystem process(es) that are operating. Thus, the task manager successfully monitors global system performance needs.

Although the present invention has been described in accordance with the embodiments shown, one of ordinary skill in the art will readily recognize that there could be variations to the embodiments and those variations would be within the spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, many modifications may be made by one of ordinary skill in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for managing subsystem processes from a central site in a digital media
2 distributor system, the method comprising:

3 utilizing a plurality of threads as a task manager in a central site server of the digital
4 media distributor; and

5 autonomously controlling initiation and termination of one or more subsystem processes
6 with the task manager.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein utilizing a plurality of threads further comprises
2 utilizing a main manager thread.

3 3. The method of claim 2 wherein utilizing a plurality of threads further comprises
4 utilizing a subsystem control thread as a child thread of the main manager thread.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein utilizing a plurality of threads further comprises
2 utilizing a watchdog worker thread as a child thread of the subsystem control thread.

1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein utilizing a plurality of threads further comprises
2 utilizing a spawn worker thread as a child thread of the watchdog worker thread.

1 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising utilizing one watchdog worker thread and
2 one spawn worker thread for each subsystem process.

1 7. The method of claim 3 further comprising utilizing the subsystem control thread to
2 determine need for initiation of a subsystem process.

1 8. The method of claim 6 further comprising utilizing the watchdog worker thread to
2 start each subsystem process through the spawn worker thread and to monitor performance of
3 each subsystem process.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein utilizing the spawn worker thread further comprises
2 spawning each subsystem process and waiting for termination of each spawned subsystem
3 process.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling one or more subsystem processes further
2 comprises controlling a subsystem process from the group comprising a scheduler process, a
3 stage manager process, a local insertion system proxy process, an error document check process,
4 a response document processor process, a disk pool manager process, a request generator process,
5 As-Run manager processes, an update network break time process, and a network local broadcast
6 process.

1 11. A digital media distribution (DMD) system with centralized management of
2 subsystem processes, the DMD system comprising:

3 a distribution network for data object transmission;

4 a central site server, the central site server utilizing a plurality of threads as a task

5 manager for autonomous control of initiation and termination of one or more subsystem

6 processes associated with data object transmission; and

7 a plurality of remote site servers for receiving data object transmissions from the

8 central site server via the distribution network.

1 12. The system of claim 10 wherein the central site server utilizes a main manager thread

2 for the task manager.

3 13. The system of claim 11 wherein the central site server utilizes a subsystem control

4 thread as a child thread of the main manager thread.

5 14. The system of claim 12 wherein the central site server utilizes a watchdog worker

6 thread as a child thread of the subsystem control thread.

7 15. The system of claim 13 wherein the central site server utilizes a spawn worker thread

8 as a child thread of the watchdog worker thread.

1 16. The system of claim 14 wherein the central site server utilizes one watchdog worker

2 thread and one spawn worker thread for each subsystem process.

1 17. The system of claim 12 wherein the central site server further utilizes the subsystem
2 control thread to determine need for initiation of a subsystem process.

1 18. The system of claim 15 wherein the central site server further utilizes the watchdog
2 worker thread to start each subsystem process through the spawn worker thread and to monitor
3 performance of each subsystem process.

1 19. The system of claim 17 wherein the central site server further utilizes the spawn
2 worker thread for spawning each subsystem process and waiting for termination of each spawned
3 subsystem process.

1 20. A computer readable medium containing program instruction for managing
2 subsystem processes from a central site in a digital media distributor (DMD) system, the program
3 instructions comprising:

4 providing a task manager as a main program thread of an operating system of a central
5 site server of the DMD system; and

6 managing subsystem processes from start-up to shut down, including states of online,
7 offline, process inoperable, deadlock inoperable, and spawn inoperable, with the task manager to
8 dynamically manage the DMD system.

1 21. The program instructions of claim 19 wherein providing a task manager further
2 comprises utilizing a control thread and worker threads for managing the subsystem processes.

ABSTRACT

Aspects for managing subsystem processes from a central site in a digital media distributor system are presented. The aspects include utilizing a plurality of threads as a task manager in a central site server of the digital media distributor, and autonomously controlling initiation and termination of one or more subsystem processes with the task manager. The aspects further include providing the task manager as a main program thread of an operating system of a central site server of the DMD system, and managing subsystem processes from start-up to shut down, including states of online, offline, process inoperable, deadlock inoperable, and spawn inoperable, with the task manager to dynamically manage the DMD system.

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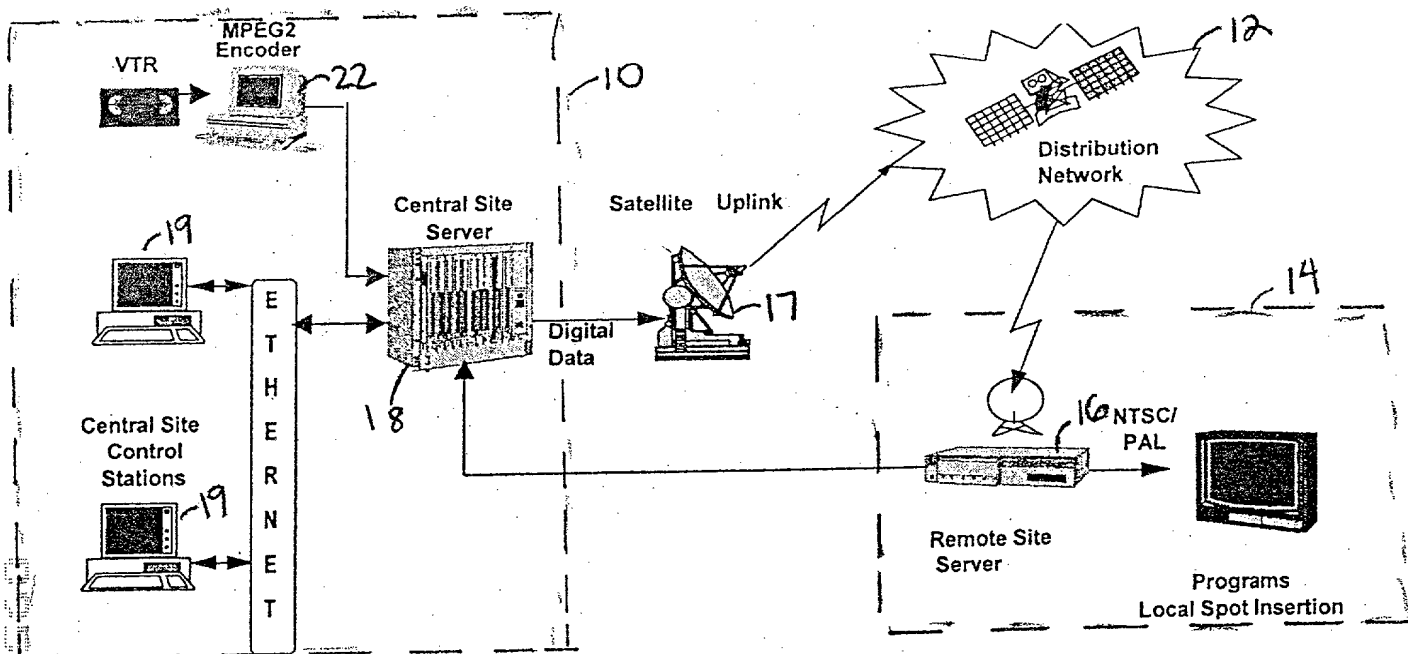


Fig. 1

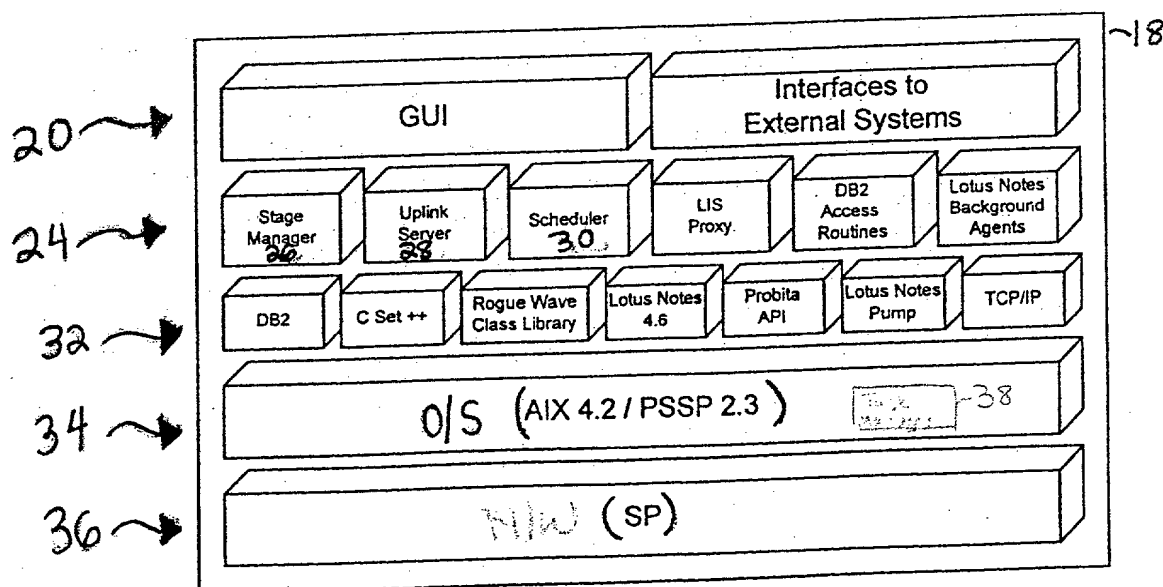
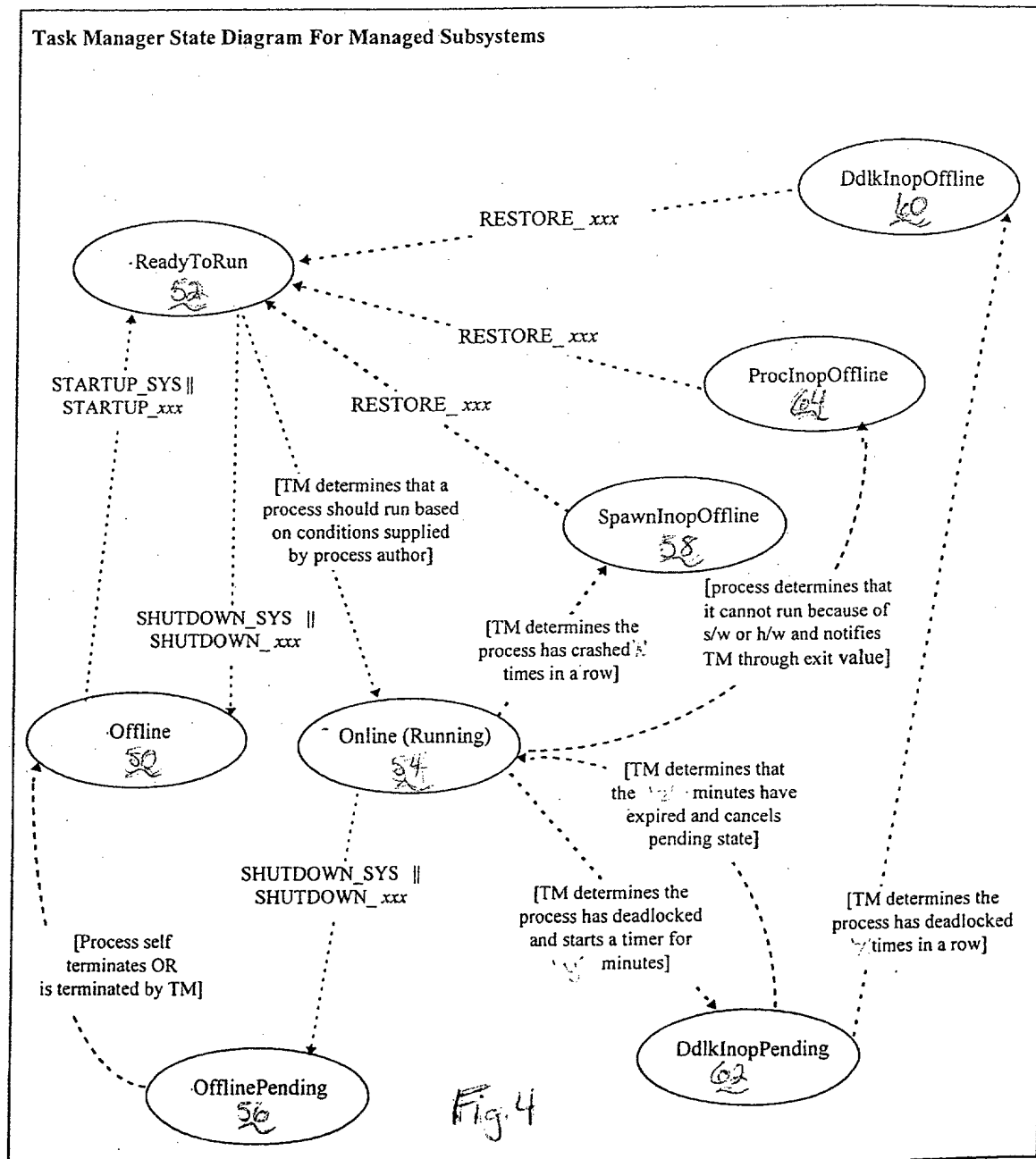
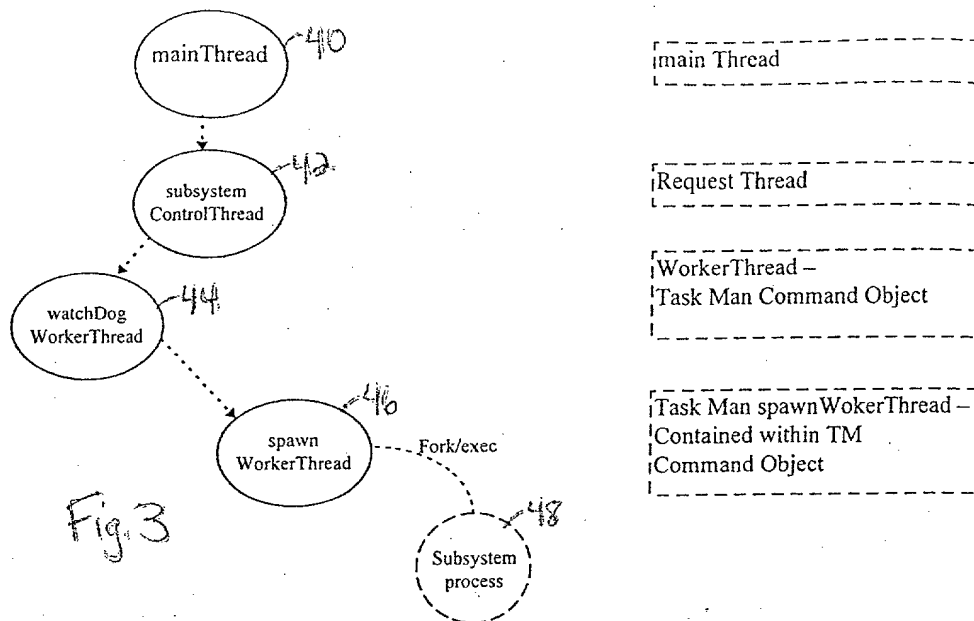


Fig. 2



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named joint-inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name,

I believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING SUBSYSTEM PROCESSES IN A DMD SYSTEM

the specification of which

X is attached hereto.
___ was filed on _____
under Attorney's docket no.: _____
as Application Serial No.: _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 (a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119, of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Claimed

_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	_____ Yes	_____ No
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	_____ Yes	_____ No

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

_____ (Application Serial No.)	_____ (Filing Date)	_____ (Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)
_____ (Application Serial No.)	_____ (Filing Date)	_____ (Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorneys and/or agents to prosecute this application and conduct all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

H. St. Julian, Reg. No. 30,329
Anthony N. Magistrale, Reg. No. 35,595
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Edward A. Pennington, Reg. No. 32,588
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George Grosser, Reg. No. 25,629

Joseph C. C. Redmond, Reg. No. 18,753
Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr., Reg. No. 30,801
Janyce R. Mitchell, Reg. No.: 40,095
Stephen G. Sullivan, Reg. No.: 38,329
Michele Liu, Reg. No.: 44,875
Wendell J. Jones, Reg. No. P45,961
Doretha L. Robinson, Reg. No. 45,048

Please direct all telephone calls to Mr. Joseph A. Sawyer, Jr. at telephone number (650) 493-4540 and address all correspondence to: **SAWYER LAW GROUP LLP, P.O. Box 51418, Palo Alto, California 94303**

Full Name of **first**/joint Inventor: Jennie Ching

Residence Address: 19204 Stare Street, Northridge, California 91324

Country of Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: Same

Signature of Inventor:



Date: 3/24/00

Full Name of **second**/joint Inventor: Eric Hsiao

Residence Address: 1905 Kerns Avenue, San Marino, California 91108

Country of Citizenship: United States of America

Post Office Address: Same

Signature of Inventor:



Date: 03/24/00

COMBINED DECLARATION/POWER OF ATTORNEY (continued)

Full Name of **third**/joint Inventor: **Peter S. Lee**

Residence Address: **23140 Park Marco Polo, Calabasas, California 91302**

Country of Citizenship: **United States of America**Post Office Address: **Same**

Signature of Inventor:

[Signature]

Date: Mar 22, 2000

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2
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COMBINED DECLARATION/POWER OF ATTORNEY (continued)

Full Name of **fourth**/joint Inventor: **Cris W. Sandoval**

Residence Address: **2536 28th Street #3, Santa Monica, California 90405**

Country of Citizenship: **United States of America**Post Office Address: **Same**

Signature of Inventor: 

Date: 3/24/00

[illegible]